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DECORATION & FURNITURE

LESSONS IN TAPESTRY PAINTING.

I.



THE numerous uses to which painted tapestry can be put include screens, curtains, portières, coverings for chairs and couches, and others that will readily suggest themselves to the reader. In Paris, where it originated, being first publicly shown, in 1861, at the exhibition of

the Union Centrale des Beaux Arts, it has been utilized in the decoration of important buildings like the Opera House and many of the churches; some of the foremost artists of France not finding the work unworthy of their brushes. In private buildings it is now freely used on both sides of the Atlantic.

The best method of fastening the canvas to the wall is to have it stretched on light wooden frames. The tapestries, by this means, can be removed at pleasure, and the frames keep them from contact with the wall, so that there is no danger of injury from damp. The best dyes, it is claimed, are indelible, and, though not at all liable to soil quickly, the painting can easily be cleaned if necessary. Painting on canvas or burlaps with oil colors thinned with turpentine must not be confounded with tapestry painting. The coloring, which is entirely on the surface, is apt to clog up the texture and stiffen the canvas, which is far from being the case in tapestry painting, the dyes used in which sink into the material and become, as it were, an integral part of it. Moreover, the results arrived at in "dye painting," as it is sometimes called, do not in the least resemble the hand work of the loom. One of the chief reasons of the success of tapestry painting is doubtless to be found in the clever imitation, in the canvas to be painted on, of the texture of real tapestry. Indeed, when it is covered by a competent hand it is difficult to tell the painted fabric from tapestry executed with the loom.

The canvas comes in various degrees of fineness, graded according to the particular style of work required. At first sight it seems rather costly, but it is really not so, considering the great durability of the fabric, which is made of pure linen, is very solid, and, although pliable, has a firm spring in it very agreeable to paint on. The texture varies from a very coarse rib suited for large work to as fine a one as could possibly be woven in actual tapestry. This fine-ribbed canvas, which is quite white, is used for delicate subjects where strong high lights are desirable. The coarser makes are mostly of an écru shade, but vary little in strength of color. Besides the linen canvas already mentioned, a canvas made entirely of wool, but similar in appearance,

is manufactured for upholstery purposes; it somewhat resembles woolen rep. The wear of it is almost endless.

The proper French dyes are sold in a liquid state in bottles of two sizes, to suit a larger or smaller consumption. This is convenient in any case, because some colors are much more in request than others. The set consists of about thirty-six dyes, which are named after the known artists' colors they represent; but they are not really derived from the same sources, and therefore in the working they do not answer quite the same purpose. Experience, however, soon teaches their respective advantages. It is by no means necessary to purchase the whole set, unless your intentions are very ambitious.

With regard to brushes, the usual hog-hair brushes sold for oil painting will do. They must be stiff, with rather short bristles. A special make has, however, been brought out most delightful to paint with. These are very firm and of various shapes suited to the work. Some are round, for scrubbing in flat tints; some chisel-shaped, for outlining, and others are cut slanting. The

sortment of all the necessary materials. The outfit for one about to begin tapestry painting need cost only a few dollars, if the money be judiciously expended.

The colors most useful at first are as follows: Two chrome yellows, light and medium, gold yellow, cadmium, Prussian blue, cobalt, spring-time green, emerald green, brown red, raw Sienna, raw umber, Italian earth, Cassel earth, pink madder, vermilion, neutral tint, and flesh tint. Ten or a dozen brushes of assorted sizes will be needed; the smallest and the medium sizes are most useful. Be sure to select one or two sharp chisel-shaped ones for outlining. Sable brushes are sometimes recommended for this purpose, but they have not enough power of resistance. Several small jars will be wanted for diluting and mixing tints with a medium which is made for the purpose. This medium, in the form of small yellow crystals, is sold in bottles. To prepare it for use, a small quantity is thoroughly dissolved in warm—not boiling—water. Occasionally stir the crystals until they are quite melted. The

medium fixes the colors, and tends in some measure to preserve their strength. Do not mix much at a time, as it does not keep well in a liquid state.

Having bought your outfit, the next thing to engage your attention is the selection of a design. For a first attempt it might be well to try some foliage, so as to become a little used to the working, before attempting anything more ambitious, but choose a design that can be utilized; there is no reason why your first effort should not be a success. A mantel border and the seat and back of a chair are good subjects to begin with. For the seat of a chair a study of begonia leaves is most effective, and the coloring is well adapted for the dyes. Being bold in outline, such a study lessens the difficulties in making a start. For this design, the coarser woolen tapestry will best answer the purpose. Although very wide, you are not obliged to buy more



OVER-DOOR BY BOUCHER. TAPESTRY DESIGN FOR LOUIS XV. ROOM.

(FOR HINTS FOR TREATMENT, SEE PAGE 102.)

last named are invaluable for carrying the color up to the edge of an outline.

I find that at many dealers in artists' materials what are sold for tapestry colors do not resemble the real dyes in the least; and the same thing may be said of the canvas. I was actually offered in one store a twilled canvas partially primed, and was told in all seriousness that it was tapestry canvas. Out of curiosity, I asked to see their colors. What these were made of that were shown me I do not know, but they were all opaque, and certainly wholly unlike French tapestry dyes, for the latter are always clear. The genuine French colors, it should be borne in mind, should bear the foreign label. The use of spurious colors and canvas cannot but end in disaster; therefore, I would recommend that great care be taken to obtain none but the genuine articles. This is a matter of so much importance that I trust the editor will allow me to mention the name of M. T. Wynne, of 75 East Thirteenth Street, who has an excellent as-

than the piece you require; for if of a reasonable shape there is no difficulty in having it cut to suit you. The next thing to do is to stretch the canvas on a rough light wooden frame. Any carpenter will make one for a trifle. Fasten the canvas with tacks or drawing pins placed rather close together. Be sure you keep the ribs of the material even, because unless you do this, when taken out of the frame it will straighten itself, and your picture will consequently be all awry. For a mantel or table border, the design of briony published in the August number of *The Art Amateur* would be excellent. The decorative figure in the same number by Ellen Welby is also a very good subject for tapestry painting. As this figure is only the second of a series of six, it may be well to note them as they come out. They might be utilized for screens or door panels. If painting a border, have a frame made half or a third of the length required, and move the canvas on as required. It is possible to paint with the

tapestry pinned down on a board; but it is not advisable, because the colors soak through to the wood.

Take a careful tracing of the design, and transmit it to the canvas by means of red tracing paper. That of an Indian red shade is preferable. Another method is to pounce the pattern on. For this purpose, prick the design on the wrong side, so that the rough surface of the holes is uppermost; then lay the tracing on the canvas, and gently dab on it some finely-powdered charcoal tied up in fine muslin. Raise the tracing carefully and beneath it you will find a clear dotted outline. No time should be lost in going over the whole of this in color. Practical directions as to the actual method of painting will be given next month.

EMMA HAYWOOD.

THE WATTEAU TAPESTRY.

THIS exquisite design (given on pages 102, 103) is well suited for a portière when enlarged to the proper size in its entirety. Indeed, nothing would be more elegant and appropriate for such a purpose. It can also be utilized for a fire-screen by omitting the upper and lower portions of the panel, dividing it just below the wreath and festoons of flowers, omitting the floral pendant. Carry across the top the same plain border that runs down the sides. Cutting off a little from the tree on the left is of no consequence. The lower portion must be eliminated just where the rivulet trickles over the edge of the rock. Fill in the curved space beneath the rock with the same dark border that encloses the rest of the picture. With a little skilful adaptation this design could also be used for the centre panel of a threefold screen; but it would not be well for any but a very experienced hand to tamper with the actual arrangement of the drawing, or its harmony would assuredly be marred.

A good scheme of color in keeping with a Watteau subject would be as follows: The dress of the female figure delicate salmon pink, this tint to be obtained by using vermilion sufficiently diluted with water to make it very pale. For the darkest shadows use pure red brown. For the half tones, pink, madder and vermilion diluted. The shoulder-knots should be of a much darker shade than the dress, but of the same tone. The bows in the hair of the two shades of pink and red. The hair itself powdered. The chemisette and sleeves white. For the highest lights in these leave the canvas intact, but for the shadows use cobalt blue and raw umber diluted in different degrees. For the man's dress pale turquoise blue for the stockings, knee-breeches, and shoe-bows. The shoes, doublet, and hat buff-color, obtained by mixing yellow ochre with a slight touch of black; shade this with raw umber and Vandyck brown.* The sky, which forms a background for the festoons of

* For the flesh use flesh-color ready prepared, diluting it to the proper tint and shading with raw umber and a very little neutral tint.

flowers, must be of very pale blue scrubbed in as a flat tint, composed of cobalt blue, a good deal diluted, with just a dash of emerald green mixed with it. The border is of a rich dark red. Vermilion, crimson lake and brown red mixed makes a good color. The painting of the trees must be as varied as possible. Spring-time green is indispensable, and shaded with Italian earth will answer admirably for the foliage on either side at the lower portion of the design, and for the grassy tufts growing on the rock. For different shades of green, chromes, light and dark, yellow ochre, raw Sienna; and burnt Sienna mixed and diluted in different proportions

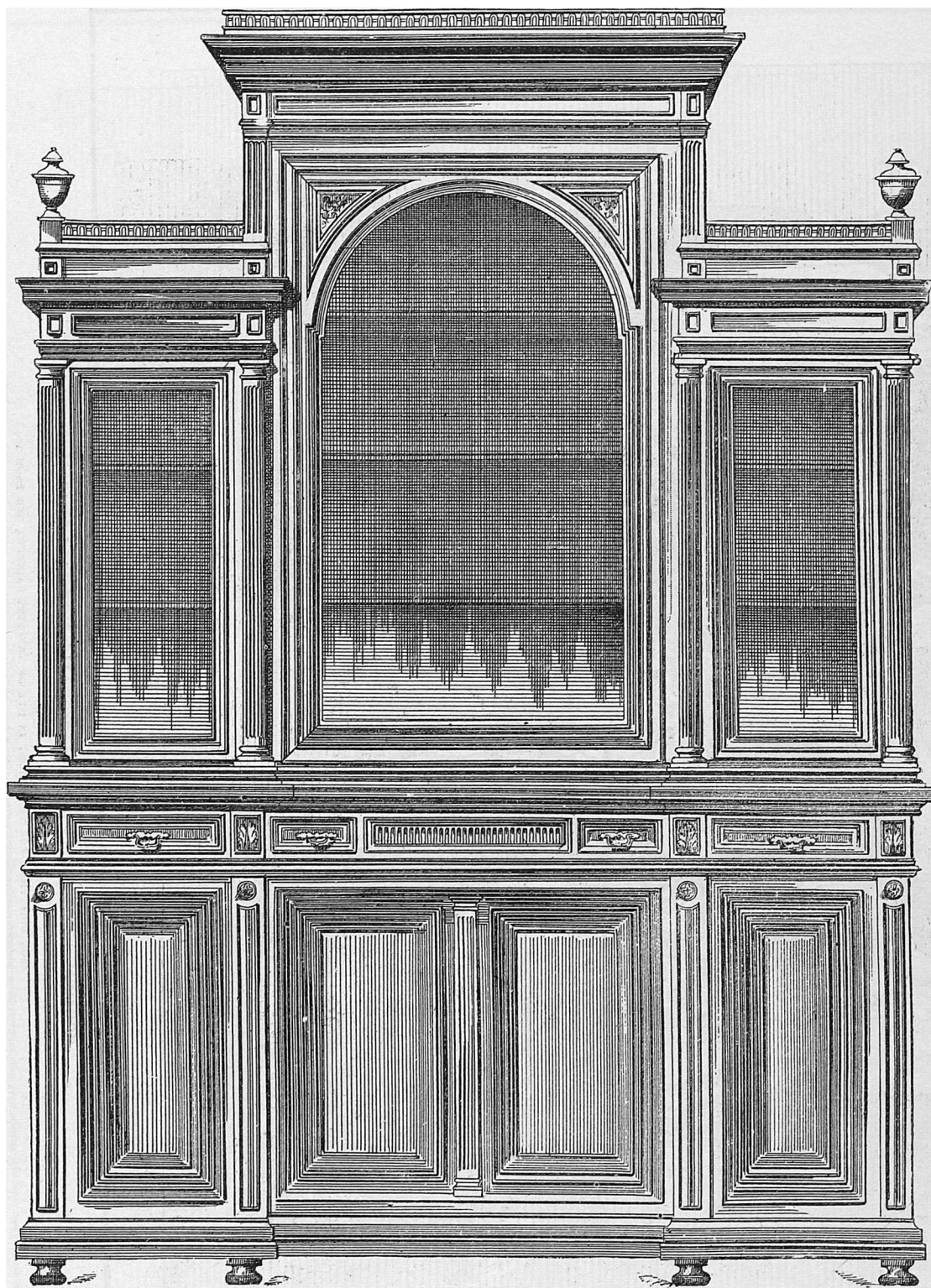
little medium has been dissolved. If for a portière, use woolen tapestry, but if for a screen tapestry canvas is preferable.

THE BOUCHER OVER-DOOR DESIGN.

THE design of Boucher's, given herewith (page 103), is from an "over-door" painted by him in the Hôtel Soubise, now demolished. Though originally executed in oils, it is very well adapted to be reproduced in painted tapestry, and might as well serve for a screen as to fill the place above a door. The coloring of all such or-

namental paintings in Boucher's time was light, rather gay as to the costumes, and, in general, such as is most easily obtained in tapestry painting. The frame, as in the case of all rococo works of the sort, may either be treated as part of the picture, the tapestry outside of it being tinted one deep color, or it may be of carved and gilded wood, or of wood painted white and relieved with gilding. In the following instructions it will be assumed that it will be painted, and that a simple rectangular frame and stand of mahogany or rosewood will enclose the whole composition.

In that case it will be advisable to paint the spare canvas between the real frame and the painted one a dark blue. The frame will be painted in several washes of rich yellow with outlines and a few washes of burnt Sienna for shading. It is better not to attempt to make it very realistic by the use of other tints. Except the outlining, which should be left to the last, it may be the first work done. The blue and gold of the border will give a value to the white of the tapestry which the painter will not care to lose by the application of too deep color in the sky and in the lights. Take note of the cloud-markings in the design, and let them separate the tints, which should be at the bottom turquoise, shading into "bleu du ciel." The edges of the clouds may be left white, while the rest of them will receive, in several washes, a tone of the blue used in the



DESIGN FOR BOOKCASE, IN MAHOGANY OR OTHER DARK WOOD.

with cobalt, Prussian blue, and indigo will give all the required tones. Prussian green and vegetable green are useful colors ready mixed. The rocks must be painted in the lighter parts a cool gray. Neutral tint diluted will produce the necessary color. The shadows must be of a warmer shade with a variety of tints touched in here and there, to give brightness and tone. Keep the rivulet light and sparkling. For the flowers, chiefly pink roses, repeat the treatment for the dress. The scrolls paint with golden yellow shaded with raw umber; the same for bow, quiver, and torch. The bird gray and brown. The dolphins must be delicately painted in rainbow shades, like opalescent glass. The corner ornaments, partially covered with the dolphin's tails, a rich deep gold with red tracery a shade or two darker than the border. For diluting the colors use water in which a

upper part of the sky deepened by the addition of a very little rose madder. The distant trees to the right may receive a first wash of this same tint, to be gone over afterward with various light tones of green. To the left, where they are nearer, the greens only should be used. The sheep and dog may be treated as white objects; but, in the shading, less blue should be used than in the woman's chemise, so as to make a distinction between the warm white of an animal's skin and the colder white of linen drapery. The woman's dress may be a bright red with shadows either in green or purple tones. The man's dress may be in various tones of lilac, the darkest being in the shaded parts of the coat. The broken bank in the foreground gives an opportunity to introduce the golden and burnt Sienna tints of the frame in new combinations into the picture, while the dark blue or indigo